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The Powers Family Sees

Hope of a 'Trade'

By DON FOREST

The mother, the father and the wife of Francis Gary Powers, the U-2 pilot serving 10 years in a Soviet prison, reacted the same way when they heard of the crash of the Bulgarian plane which the Italian government says was spying.

"I thought—oh, God, maybe if the pilot is valuable enough they'll trade him for Francis," the U-2 flier's mother, Mrs. Oliver Powers, told The Post today.

"When I heard it, the first thing I thought was, maybe this will get him back," said Powers' father, Oliver.

"When I heard the radio, I thought, maybe he'll get out now, maybe they'll swap him for their man," said the pilot's wife.

An Eye to State Dept.

In a telephone interview, Powers' parents, speaking from Pound, Va., and his wife, from Milledgeville, Ga., said they hoped that "perhaps the State Dept. can work something out."

Of the three, Powers' father held out the least hope.

"You know, that Bulgarian doesn't belong to us," he said.

"He belongs to the Italians. It's too early to tell what can happen. Maybe, though, we can talk to someone in the State Dept. a little later and work out a swap."

The flier's mother said: "I just pray that something will come out of this. Maybe they'll

want the other pilot bad enough to trade him for Francis. But I pray all the time."

Downed in May, 1960

Powers was sentenced on Aug. 20, 1960, to 10 years in jail after he was convicted of spying. His plane had come down over Sverdlovsk on May 1, 1960.

Powers' wife said: "I'm hoping that this will be it. For all our sakes."

"Francis is down in the dumps," she said. "I had a letter from him about two weeks ago. He was very discouraged. All of us had hoped he would get time off for good behavior, maybe a third off. That's what they

[Soviet officials] had said might happen."

"But in his last letter, he wrote, and said that he had applied for a work camp detail and had been refused. He said they told him because of the severity of the crime, there was no hope for time off."

"He's in for 10 years... Unless . . ."